

Royal Holloway, University of London
Course specification for an undergraduate award
BA English and American Literature (QT37)

Section 1 – Introduction to your course

This course specification is a formal document, which provides a summary of the main features of your course and the learning outcomes that you might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if you take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. Further information is contained in the University prospectus, and in various handbooks, all of which you will be able to access online. Alternatively, further information on the University's academic regulations and policies can be found [here](#). Further information on the University's Admissions Policy can be found [here](#).

Your degree course in English and American Literature is delivered in three stages, each of which comprises one year of full-time study during which you must follow modules to the value of 120 credits. The courses provide progressive structures in which you are able to gain ever-wider knowledge and understanding, and appropriate skills. The courses contain a combination of compulsory mandatory modules to introduce you to historical periods, to the principle historical and literary genres, and to contemporary critical and theoretical approaches, with a range of stage two and three specialist options. In each case the structure encourages you, in stage two and three, to develop your own interests through informed choice among specialist options. In stage three you are required to write a dissertation and/or long essays. The courses aim to produce graduates with a range of personal attributes relevant to the world beyond HE, who are able to engage in lifelong learning, to consider ethics and values, and to contribute to the wider community.

While Royal Holloway keeps all the information made available under review, courses and the availability of individual modules, especially optional modules are necessarily subject to change at any time, and you are therefore advised to seek confirmation of any factors which might affect your decision to follow a specific course. In turn, Royal Holloway will inform you as soon as is practicable of any significant changes which might affect your studies.

The following is a brief description for some of the most important terminology for understanding the content of this document:

Degree course – May also be referred to as 'degree programme' or simply 'programme', these terms refer to the qualification you will be awarded upon successful completion of your studies.

Module – May also be referred to as 'course', this refers to the individual units you will study each year to complete your degree course. Undergraduate degrees at Royal Holloway comprise a combination of modules in multiples of 15 credits to the value of 120 credits per year. On some degree courses a certain number of optional modules must be passed for a particular degree title.

Section 2 – Course details			
Date of specification update	April 2024	Location of study	Egham Campus
Course award and title	BA English and American Literature	Level of study	Undergraduate
Course code	2959	UCAS code	QT37
Year of entry	2025/26		
Awarding body	Royal Holloway, University of London		
Department or school	English	Other departments or schools involved in teaching the course	N/A
Mode(s) of attendance	Full-time or part-time	Duration of the course	Three years or six years
Accrediting Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirement(s)	N/A		
Link to Coursefinder for further information:	https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk/studying-here/	For queries on admissions:	https://royalholloway.ac.uk/applicationquery

Section 3 – Degree course structure					
3.1 Mandatory module information					
The following table summarises the mandatory modules which students must take in each year of study					
Year	Module code	Module title	Credits	FHEQ level	Module status (Mandatory Condonable MC or Mandatory Non-Condonable MNC)
1	EN1401	Introducing America: American Literature 1600 to 1900	30	4	MC
1	EN1105	Literature and Crisis	30	4	MC
1	EN1011	English: Thinking as a Critic	15	4	MC
1	EN1107	English: Re-orienting the Novel	30	4	MC
1	EN1112	English: Introduction to Poetry	15	4	MC
2	EN2401	American Literature from 1900	30	5	MC
<p>This table sets out the most important information for the mandatory modules on your degree course. These modules are central to achieving your learning outcomes, so they are compulsory, and all students on your degree course will be required to take them. You will be automatically registered for these modules each year. Mandatory modules fall into two categories: 'condonable' or 'non-condonable'.</p> <p>In the case of mandatory 'non-condonable' (MNC) modules, you must pass the module before you can proceed to the next year of your course, or to successfully graduate with a particular degree title. In the case of mandatory 'condonable' (MC) modules, these must be taken but you can still progress or graduate even if you do not pass them. Please note that although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, changes to your degree course may be made where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events. For example: where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback and/or the advice of external advisors, to enhance academic provision.</p>					
3.2 Optional modules					
<p>In addition to mandatory modules, there will be a number of optional modules available during the course of your degree. Although Royal Holloway will keep changes to a minimum, new options may be offered or existing ones may be withdrawn. For example, where reasonable and necessary due to unexpected events, where requirements of relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) have changed and course requirements must change accordingly, or where changes are deemed necessary on the basis of student feedback</p>					

and/or the advice of External Advisors, to enhance academic provision. There may be additional requirements around option selection; please contact the Department for further information.

In your **second year** you must choose options equal to the value of 90 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered by the Department. You must take at least 30 credits in American literature, or alternatively balance English and American modules which cover both literatures in a manner approved by the course director. Over your second and third years, you must take at least 15 credits focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare).

In your **final year** you are recommended to take at least 60 credits from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

Special Author Project (30 credits);

Special Topic (30 credits) **and**

Dissertation (30 credits). **Only one Dissertation is permitted.**

You must (whether you accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three modules offered by the Department to a total of 120 credits, balancing English and American modules in a manner approved by the Course Director. If not already completed in Stage Two, the requirement for 15 credits focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in Stage Three.

Section 4 - Progressing through each year of your degree course

For further information on the progression and award requirements for your degree, please refer to Royal Holloway's [Academic Regulations](#).

Progression throughout the year/s is monitored through performance in summative or formative coursework assignments. Please note that if you hold a Student Visa and you choose to leave (or are required to leave because of non-progression) or complete early (before the course end date stated on your CAS), then this will be reported to UKVI.

All first year students on single, joint or combined honours courses offered all or in part by the School of Humanities, School of Performing and Digital Arts, or department of Politics, International Relations and Philosophy are required to pass a Moodle-based writing skills quiz in order to progress into the second year of study. The pass mark for the test is 60%. Students may attempt the quiz as often as they wish with no penalties or capping. Students who meet the requirements for progression as stipulated in the [Academic Taught Regulations](#) but fail to pass the Moodle-based Academic Integrity module will not be permitted to progress into their second year of academic study.

Part time students must take:

Stage one (a):

Modules equivalent to 60 credits of the following in consecutive terms, as timetabled:

EN1401 Introducing America, 1600-1900 (30 credits)

EN1105 Literature and Crisis (30 credits)

EN1107 Re-orienting the Novel (30 credits)

EN1112 Introduction to Poetry (15 credits)

EN1011 Thinking as a Critic (15 credits)

Stage one (b):

The remaining modules equivalent to 60 credits of the following:

EN1401 Introducing America, 1600-1900 (30 credits)

EN1105 Literature and Crisis (30 credits)

EN1107 Re-orienting the Novel (30 credits)

EN1112 Introduction to Poetry (15 credits)

EN1011 Thinking as a Critic (15 credits)

Stage two (a):

Students must take the following:

EN2401 American Literature 1900-1940

and options equal to the value of 30 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered by the Department. Over the course of Stage Two and Stage Three, students must take at least 30 credits focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare).

Stage two (b):

Students choose options equal to the value of 60 credits from a list of Stage two modules offered by the Department. They must take at least 30 credits in American literature, or alternatively balance English and American modules which cover both literatures in a manner approved by the course director.

Stage three (a):

Students are recommended to take at least 30 credits from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

Special Author Project (30 credits);

Special Topic (30 credits) and

Dissertation (30 credits). Only one Dissertation is permitted.

Students must (whether they accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three modules offered by the Department to a total of 60 credits, balancing English and American modules in a manner approved by the Course Director. If not already completed in Stage Two, the requirement for 30 credits focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in Stage Three.

Stage three (b):

Students are recommended to take at least 30 credits from the range of options offered by the Department in any of the following three areas:

Special Author Project (30 credits);

Special Topic (30 credits) and

Dissertation (30 credits). Only one Dissertation is permitted.

Students must (whether they accept that recommendation or not) choose options from the list of Stage three modules offered by the Department to a total of 60 credits, balancing English and American modules in a manner approved by the Course Director. If not already completed in Stage Two or Three (a), the requirement for 30 credits focusing on literature before 1780 (excluding Shakespeare) must be completed in Stage Three.

Section 5 – Educational aims of the course

The aims of this course are:

- to enable you to develop independent critical thinking and judgement;
- to engage you imaginatively in the process of reading and analysing literary texts;
- to encourage you to appreciate the expressive resources of language;
- to encourage you to reflect critically upon the act of reading;
- to promote an understanding of formal, generic and aesthetic aspects of literary texts;
- to encourage an awareness of literature's historical and political dimension as it relates to national contexts;
- to foster an awareness of contextual aspects of the production and determination of meaning;
- to develop a range of subject-specific and transferable skills;
- to provide a basis for further study in English or related disciplines, and a foundation of knowledge for teachers of English at all levels;
- to provide an intellectually stimulating and satisfying experience of studying;
- to encourage in you a sense of enthusiasm for the subject, and an appreciation of its continuing social and cultural importance;
- to encourage you to take progressive responsibility for your own study through negotiating subject areas of specialism with other students in seminars and study groups, through the informed choice of options, and through an extended piece of writing in the final year.

Section 6 - Course learning outcomes				
In general terms, the courses provide opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate the following learning outcomes. (<i>Categories – Knowledge and understanding (K), Skills and other attributes (S), and Transferable skills (*)</i>)				
Theme	Course learning outcome	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
K	ENGLISH/AMERICAN: Subject Knowledge	Explore a range of literary texts from both England and America, across the full range of traditions, genres, and historical periods, including pre-1500, 1500-1850, the long 19 th century, the 20 th century, and contemporary.	Discuss and compare English and American literature from a range of literary traditions, genres, and periods, including pre-1500, 1500-1850, the long 19 th century, and the early 20 th century.	Develop specialist knowledge in focused areas of interest, such as specific periods or genres.
S	ENGLISH/AMERICAN: Reading Skills	Read literary, critical, and creative works closely and accurately.	Analyse literary, critical, and creative works in a critical and contextually informed way.	Develop independent and imaginative interpretations of literary, critical, and creative works.
S	ENGLISH/AMERICAN: Writing Skills	Write clearly, accurately, and effectively about literary texts.	Articulate a critical understanding of complex texts and ideas, demonstrating awareness of different registers and different genres of critical prose (e.g. essay, blog post, review, etc).	Demonstrate a strong command of written English, expressing sophisticated ideas about literary, critical, and creative works in clear, fluent, and stylish prose appropriate to formal and a wide range of other registers.
S	ENGLISH/AMERICAN: Research Skills	Recognise and present primary and secondary texts	Find and evaluate previous scholarship.	Apply scholarly bibliographic skills appropriate to focused areas of interest in an independent research project.
K	ENGLISH/AMERICAN: Critical Terminology and Theoretical Approaches to Literature	Recognise core technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas characteristic of literary study.	Engage with technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas in the discussion of literature.	Articulate specialist knowledge and a critical understanding of technical, critical, and theoretical terms and ideas in focused areas of interest.
K	Engaged Humanities K6 Display a breadth and depth of subject knowledge, and engage with developing subject conversations and their currency in cultural discourse now.	Recall foundational knowledge of the subject area, and use core subject skills.	Recognise and classify focussed sub-fields within the subject area, and identify and respond to relevant critical materials and contexts.	Select and apply specific debates/theories/conceptual frameworks within specialist areas of the subject field and critically identify the potential for new ideas and subject directions.

S	Applied Humanities S1 Understand the relevance of subject skills to professional and applied contexts, and how to apply that knowledge in the future.	Recognise and identify subject skills as transferable to work-based situations and competencies.	Generate outputs in a variety of formats which have application to work-based uses and/or particular audiences and/or functions.	Plan and manage an extended project/essay, using ADAPTIVE skills, INITIATIVE and SELF-MANAGEMENT to ensure successful task completion.
S	Global Humanities S2 Understand and enact intercultural awareness and competencies.	Identify and respond to diverse cultural contexts and viewpoints	Understand and differentiate the circumstances and contexts that give rise to diverse viewpoints and world views.	Reflect on bias including one's own: operate within, appreciate, and evaluate different cultural context.
S	Critical S3	FOCUS in detail to FILTER, summarise and classify a range of information (issues, texts, contexts.)	Objectively evaluate information (issues, texts, contexts) demonstrating INTEGRITY and evidence-based reasoning	Synthesise and evaluate information from disparate and potentially conflicting sources to reach INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT with the capacity to deconstruct the conditions pertaining to the construction of knowledge
S	Collaborative S4	Reflect on current experience and identify the potential to ADAPT and modify in response to that experience.	Carry out collaborative activity with RESILIENCE and provide an individual contribution to a collective goal/task.	Co-work and/or co-create in partnership with others in achievement of collective goals and recognise acknowledge the importance of collaborative practice in knowledge production.
S	Communicative S5	Recall basic subject vocabulary and present information with FOCUS and ACCURACY	Structure and organise the presentation of information in a variety of communicative modes with RELEVANCE, LOGIC and COHERENCE.	Design a presentation of information that can argue, influence or persuade, and/or can deploy a specialised vocabulary or creative/compositional technique.

Section 7 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Teaching and learning on your course is closely informed by the active research of staff, particularly in the areas of English and American Literature. In general terms, the course provides an opportunity for you to develop and demonstrate the learning outcomes detailed herein.

Teaching and learning is mostly by means of lectures; seminars; study groups; essay consultations; oral presentations and guided independent study. Assessment of knowledge and understanding is typically by formal examinations, coursework, examined essays, translation exercises, online tests and exercises, oral presentations and the dissertation or long essay. In addition, students may be involved in workshops and may produce various forms of creative or editorial work.

Contact hours come in various forms and may take the form of time spent with a member of staff in a lecture or seminar with other students. Contact hours may also be laboratory or, studio-based sessions, project supervision with a member of staff, or discussion through a virtual learning environment (VLE). These contact hours may be with a lecturer or teaching assistant, but they may also be with a technician, or specialist support staff.

The way in which each module on your degree course is assessed will also vary. Assessments designated as 'summative' will receive a mark which will count towards your overall mark for the module, and potentially your degree classification, depending on your year of study. On successful completion of the module you will gain the credits listed.

More detailed information on modules, including teaching and learning methods, and methods of assessment, can be found via the online [Module Catalogue](#). The accuracy of the information contained in this document is reviewed regularly by the university, and may also be checked routinely by external agencies.

Section 8 – Additional costs

There are no single associated costs greater than £50 per item on this degree course.

These estimated costs relate to studying this particular degree course at Royal Holloway. General costs such as accommodation, food, books and other learning materials and printing etc., have not been included, but further information is available on our website.

Section 9 – Indicators of quality and standards	
QAA Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ) Level	4-6
Your course is designed in accordance with the FHEQ to ensure your qualification is awarded on the basis of nationally established standards of achievement, for both outcomes and attainment. The qualification descriptors within the FHEQ set out the generic outcomes and attributes expected for the award of individual qualifications. The qualification descriptors contained in the FHEQ exemplify the outcomes and attributes expected of learning that results in the award of higher education qualifications. These outcomes represent the integration of various learning experiences resulting from designated and coherent courses of study.	
QAA Subject benchmark statement(s)	http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements
Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of courses in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.	

Section 10– Intermediate exit awards (where available)		
You may be eligible for an intermediate exit award if you complete part of the course as detailed in this document. Any additional criteria (e.g. mandatory modules, credit requirements) for intermediate awards is outlined in the sections below.		
Award	Criteria	Awarding body
Diploma in Higher Education (DipHE)	Pass in 210 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4 and at least 120 of which must be at or above FHEQ Level 5	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College
Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE)	Pass in 120 credits of which at least 90 must be at or above FHEQ Level 4	Royal Holloway and Bedford New College